

Three Discourses

Relating to the

DUTY

OF

PRAYER.

{ Of the Omnipresence of God.
{ Of Prayer: And
{ Of a Spiritual Mind.

Supernaquare, Collos. Cap. 3. 1.

*Benè qui precaberis, benè tibi
eveniat, & vivo, & mortuo,*

D. Pascal. —

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

OF NATURAL HISTORY

AND
OF MAN

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THE P R E F A C E.

AS to the Piety of this Performance, the *Reader* may know, that reforming the World is no Part of his Business, that Writes it by any Appointment of the Church; Much leisure and serious Thoughts gave it a Birth, and its Publication is owing to a certain Hand, for whose sake it appears in this Form, as for the Impressions the Book-Seller has made off for his own Shop, let him thank himself, if they lie there 'till my Reputation for an Author Sells them. There are every Day Instances of worse employ'd Pens; and to do no

A 2

hurt

The Preface.

hurt, when a Man talks of Religion, is now a-days no small Commendation.

Mr. *Norris* in the Fourth Volume of his Discourses, on *Pf. 37. 30*, Complains of the Controversies that all Men are ready to set forward in Religion, which Lay-hands are commonly most Busie in; But the Practical Part of Religion, he justly regrets the diffuse of in common conversation; *Men indeed Talk of Religion*, says he, *but not in a practical way*, That is, *after a serious and devotional manner*, so as to put one another in remembrance of the Great Concernments of a Good Life, and of that two-fold Eternity which depends upon it; nor do they stir one another up to the Exercise of such Christian Graces as are Necessary, both to carry them to Heaven, and to qualifie them for the Enjoyment of it.

What

The Preface.

What I have here wrote, if any body is displeased at it, 'tis a great Satisfaction to me, that they don't know who to be angry with: *Montagne* in his *Essays*, allowing all that *Malebranch* has said of his Errors, to be true; yet no where speaks so well, as when he sometimes treats of serious Things; as of *Death*, *Repentance*, and the like; and even *Don Quevedo*, how different soever it may seem from the Air of his other Writings, in his Book, which he calls, *Gobierno de Dios*; a very serious Treatise, wrote in *Spanish*, exhorts Kings to imitate our *Saviour*, and to make their *Politicks* consist with the *Innocency* of his *Life*, assuring us, That the *Gospel* well followed, will guide men thro' all *Difficulties*.

Thus he speaks also of *Prayer*, in the 10th *Chap.* of that Book. *Christ*, says he, awoke his disciples,

The Preface.

not that he might Sleep himself, but to let them see he pray'd to his Father, and that thereby they might understand, that even the Son has recourse to Prayer in Affairs of Moment, and thereby discover the Efficacy thereof: Christ Sweats, and falls into an Agony, and they again to Sleep; yet he charges them to watch and Pray, lest they enter into Temptation. If it be necessary to awaken them, over whom Christ watches, lest they enter into Temptation; in what danger are they who sleep while Satans Ministers watch to their Destruction? What temptations not will they be subject to? To what danger is not their Heart exposed? And again, he afterwards makes our Saviour thus bespeak Mankind: O that the terror of my Cries would awaken you out of the Sleep of Vanity, and give you a caution, to prevent the dangers

The Preface.

Dangers arising from too much Security.

I am sensible in what I here suffer to go abroad, I have not well considered that of the O-
rator; *Id maximè decet quemque
quod est cujusque suum maxime.*

ERRATA.

P Ag. 16. lin. 7. justly bewail. p. 18 l.
15. f. makers r. Masters. p. 20. l. 5. a-
dorn f. adorning. p. 30 l. 1. heavy. p. 36
l. 7. God's presence. l. 13. r. their f. our;
p. 43. l. 10. with hold. l. *lincâ ultimâ* and,
Sun f. Son. p. 52. l. 3. Gods f. his. p. 66.
l. 11 add not. p. 68. l. *ultimâ* them f.
him. p. 73. l. 22 cast up.

was from any such Designs; and who
can ever believe it he had not been so
that he must justify himself before the

God, who knows perfectly the hearts of
the Children of Men, and searches all
their ways: The foundation of the
Thought he has laid very low, and de-

Omnipresence

OF

GOD.

THE Hundred and thirty ninth
Psalms, which was the Ground of
this Contemplation, contains a
full and lively Display of the Omnipre-
sence of God; It was probably com-
posed by King *David*, when he lay un-
der the imputation of having evil De-
signs against the Person of *Saul*, which
he endeavours to clear himself of in ma-
ny other places of this Book: But here
he makes a formal and a solemn Appeal
to Heaven, and to the Throne of God,
in which he represents how innocent he

was from any such Designs; and who can ever believe if he had not been so, that he durst justifie himself before that God, who knows perfectly the hearts of the Children of Men, and pondereth all their ways. The foundation of this Thought he has laid very low, and begins even before our birth, as at the 15th Verse you may read; *My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth: Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book are all my members written.* No secrecy of place where I was formed could conceal me from thine eyes, thou knewest the formation of my body, and therefore must needs be acquainted with the Intentions of my Soul, which I now lay open before thee.

What is a closer retirement than Darkness, under the shelter of which so many vile Actions, and so much Wickedness is committed, and safely enough conceal'd from the knowledge of Men; Yet even this the Royal Psalmist tells us is no covert from the piercing eye of God:

If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me, yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the

the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light to thee are both alike.

We shallow-sighted Mortals cannot know aright the things that are before us; but God at one view sees us, and all that we do or ever did, what place soever we chuse for the Scene of our Actions, *Even there shall thine hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* Whether we are in our Closets or in our Beds, he is there also, and knows our Designs before we have conceiv'd them, and all we do in the very moment of action, and is intimately privy to all the ends that we pursue, the words of our mouths are heard by him in Heaven, and the Meditations of our hearts are before him.

The Angels themselves cannot overlook us, when we are communing with our own hearts, but the Almighty searches the very bottom of them, and sees the swiftest thought that ever passed thro' the mind of Man. His knowledge is infinite, His understanding boundless, *and his eyes are in all the ends of the earth; such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain thereunto: 'Tis in vain to pretend to hide our selves as Adam did upon his Transgression, for when God came to inquire*

where he was, he did not do it as one that sought him ignorantly, or knew not where he was, but by that expression he warns him where ever he was, to look to himself, since he was now no longer under the protection of Heaven.

That I may proceed in something of a method I shall divide what I have to say into these two Heads; First discourse of the Ubiquity of God: And, secondly, show you what influence this Doctrine ought to have upon the lives and actions of Men.

It will be as little satisfactory as it will be instructing to produce the various and disagreeing opinions of Men concerning the manner of Gods being present in all places; some contend eagerly for its being by means of infinite extension, others that it is by the immensity of his power and providence; and others only by his operation, that he is said to be in all places;

Now it cannot be deny'd but that the Divine power is there wheresoever it operates, but the divine power is the divine Essence it self, or God himself; Therefore wheresoever it has any effect, God is present.

I chuse rather to pass to the useful part of this knowledge, and shall insist on-

ly on such arguments as are proper to influence your practice.

Gods Government is certainly far more perfect and excellent than the government of Men. Now Kings are said to have long Hands and Ears, that is, their Power extends far, and their Information reaches where men are not aware of it; Their Spies inform them of the reproaches and treacherous Designs of either their Enemies or their Subjects against them; and this gave occasion to that useful Caution, which the Wise man dictates, *Eccles. 10. 20. Not to curse the King or the Rich man, either in our Thoughts or in our Bed-chamber*; and he goes on to give this Reason; *because a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter*. Now, when any of these things come to pass, it must be by means of such Agents as are appointed to observe Mens Actions, and to communicate what they hear or see to those that employ them; But God knows all things that are done of himself; he stands not in need of being told what men are doing or contriving; what Disturbance or Commotions they are raising in the World; what Atheistical thoughts they delight in, and what Malice and Mischief they harbor against one another. B 3 He

He sitteth between the Cherubims be the earth never so unquiet.

God himself declares, Isa. 66. 1 that Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool; and then proceeds to inquire Where is the House that ye build unto me? and where is the Place of my Rest? For all these things bath my hand made; and in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, when God has complain'd of the Prophaneness that was then in the land, and of the fatal security that prevail'd among such as said, No Evil should come upon them; *Am I a God at hand*, says the Lord, *and not a God a far off?* Do not I fill heaven and earth? And King Solomon in his Prayer upon the Dedication of the Temple, accosts God in this humble and awfull manner 1 Kings. 8. 27. *But will God indeed dwell upon the earth? Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; How much less this house that I have builded.*

When Zophar discoursing of the unsearchable Wisdom of God, had ask'd his Friend Job what discoveries he could make of the Almighty, Eloquently enough tells him. *It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is*

longer than the Earth and broader, than the
the Sea.

These are the express assertions of Scri-
pture, *That his eyes are in every place be-
holding the evil and the good; That all things
are open and naked to the eyes of him with
whom we have to do.* That is: The world
is surrounded and fill'd with his Being,
which extends it self thro' the whole Crea-
tion, and this we have sufficient reason to
conclude from the infinite fulness of his
Nature, which being self-existent, can no
ways be bounded or confin'd by any cause
from without; and therefore must neces-
sarily remain immense and uncircum-
scrib'd.

The Etymologists derive the very
Name of God from this particular Attri-
bute of his, that he beholds all things; is as
it were diffus'd, and passes thro' all things,
no less than the Light does the Air by
which we are compass'd; The Hea-
thens pray'd to God at any time and place,
which shews that they were perswaded,
that he was always and every where
present, at least by his knowledge and
his power.

Thus Pythagoras and Tully, have af-
firm'd that God is a Spirit or Mind, which
pervades the Creation, and that Men
ought to think he beholds every thing.

and fills every place; *Jovis omnia plena*, says a Heathen Poet; *Ubique & omnibus preesto*, are Seneca's words; and in another place, he says, *We can turn our selves no where but we meet with some Foot-steps of him*; nothing is hid from him, he is intimate to our Minds and mingles himself with our very Thoughts. If it should be

ask'd how these things can be, it must suffice to say that the manner of them surpasses all Human Understanding. All that a Christian need to know, is that they are so and he must humbly, acquiesce in so express and concerning a Truth, and with all due acknowledgment, confess not only that *Great is the Lord* and *greatly to be fear'd*, but also *unsearchable*.

Altho' God has declar'd he would be more immediately present, in some particular place above the rest, yet this does not exclude him from any; Thus among the Jews the Temple was his peculiar Residence, in the *Holy of Holies* was his resting place.

Before the building of that Famous House, He promised to meet the Children of Israel, and Commune with them from above the Mercy-Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, which St. Stephen calls, *The Tabernacle of Witness*, and 'tis also call'd the *Tabernacle of Meeting*, where every

every one that sought the Lord was to go, *Exod. 33. 7*

But since our Saviour has appear'd in the World, we are to act by the directions that he has left us, who commands us to raise up our Minds above all these visible Representations, and to pray to our Father which is in Heaven.

But when we direct our Prayers thitherward, we are not therefore to suppose that he is a great way off, remov'd beyond the reach of our Cries, and at a mighty distance from us; No, we must by a lively Faith, and an actual intention in our Prayers, make him present to our Minds; for as the Apostle tells us, he is not far from every one of us, and in him we live and move, and have our Being.

'Tis utterly in vain to pretend to make any nice Inquiries into the Attributes of the Almighty; we shall only distract ourselves and confound our Faculties, and after all we must rest satisfied with the more familiar and easy explanation of his *Omnipresence*, and this will often help us to reflect, that there is no place where his eyes and his providence reach not, that both Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, are fill'd with the effects of his power, and the Communications of his glorious Essence; What a Christian application might

might be made of the *Motto* of an *Eastern King*: *Tanquam Prasenti* is a better Inscription for the Almighty than the Escution of any earthly King whatsoever: Were this consideration of Gods presence, firmly rooted in our Minds, it would strangely over awe all our Thoughts and Actions; it would make us bring them daily to be try'd both by the *Law* and by the *Testimony*; By that which is to be the rule of our Life, and by our own Consciences; and in short, it would be exceeding fruitful of every good work: *The Lord looketh down from Heaven, he beholdeth all the sons, of men, from the place of his Habitation, he looketh upon all the Inhabitants of the earth; He goes still forth with every Army into the Field, imbarques in every Ship, presides in every Council, and follows every individual Man, to the remotest quarters of the World; His eye is upon us in the Dungeon, and in distress, in the highest elevation of Condition; he is acquainted with the haughtiness of our Hearts, and registers against us every impenitent, profane and insulting Thought; in the darkness of the evening and at noon day, in the works of the hand, and in the inticeing of the heart, God is with us; he beholdeth Wickedness and Spight also, and shall he not requite it with his hand.*

If

If *Elisha* could say to *Gehazi*, (as 'tis interpreted by *St. Jerom*) Was not my heart in presence when the man return'd from his Charriot to meet thee? If I say a Prophet could thus expostulate with his Servant of what had pass'd at some Miles distance, when he receiv'd Presents from the *Syrian King*; shall not God be thought much more able to say so to every one of our Consciences at one time or other? Was not I present when thou hast so often taken in vain and blasphem'd my Name, when thou hast deny'd my Being, and set at nought my Laws, when thou hast entred the adulterous Bed, and taken a reward against the Innocent? *All these things have I seen, tho' thou thought'st wickedly, that I was such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thy face.*

Further considerations about Gods Omnipresence can signifie nothing; a Philosophical Account may indeed gratify the Curiosity, and fill the Fancy of inquisitive men; But things of this moment ought to have another effect, and strike deep into the Souls of Men, make lasting impressions upon their Hearts, and be fix'd in their Memories, and then we shall be taught and instructed in every passage of our Life, and in every performance of our

our Duty; in short, we shall endeavour to approve our hearts to him, because he is so intimately present with them.

For altho' he be in Heaven as the place of his especial Residence, where his glorious presence fills with Joy and eternal Comfort, the Souls of the Just; Yet there is not a Man upon Earth, but he sees and observes him. We are all expos'd to his view, and we may as soon fly from our selves as from God; our Souls may as soon quit these Tabernacles of Clay, and they not presently be turn'd to corruption, as God leave off superintending over the affairs of this World, and all things in it not presently run to the utmost confusion.

These are things proper for every Christians Meditation, that we are under the care and cognizance of heaven, and under the inspection of the Almighty, that his hand can reach us whithersoever we fly to avoid it, and that his power can punish us in the remotest parts of the earth: Now unless we have eradicated out of our minds all impressions of a supream Being that governs the World, and all thoughts of living virtuously in it, we cannot avoid the force of this consideration, but leave our selves without excuse, if we act not suitably to such an inspection.

And this brings me according to the Method I propos'd.

To shew you what influence this Doctrine ought to have upon the Lives and Actions of Men;

If men firmly believ'd this doctrine it would above all things ingage them to be sincere and careful in their Devotions, to be constant and frequent in calling upon God, they would then lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting, without malicious Intentions or uncharitable Designs, and would be devout without any disguises of Hypocrisy. If we could be any where out of the preience of God, our careless and undecent behaviour might possibly find an excuse, if we could think God not able to attend to the several Petitions of distinct and separate men at the same time, or if we could suppose him to be such a God as *Elijah* ironically supposed *Baal* to be, when he answer'd not his Priests by fire from heaven to consume their sacrifice; that perhaps *their God was talking or pursuing his enemies, that he was on a journey, or peradventure a Sleep*; If I say we could believe that at any time whatsoever God was remiss in his attention to the concerns of this lower World, we might act with greater security when we trifle in his Worship: But when the contrary to all this does so fully appear, with what a vigorous

rous application of mind ought it to inspire us? With what zeal and fervour should it animate our devotions? And what unshaken resolutions of perseverance should we all make, Had we but strong apprehensions upon our minds, that Gods all-seeing eye was upon us, and that he that now sees, will at the last day come to Judge us? The wise man among the many useful Precepts he has left us, gives us this good Advice, *Eccles. 5. 1. Be not hasty to utter any thing before God, But consider that he is in Heaven and thou upon the Earth.* The Sacrifice of Fools is an abomination to him, and what is a greater sign of our Prayers being such, than the careless and irreverent manner we address God in the House of Prayer, the place where his Honour dwelleth, and where he has promised to be more immediately present. We would not speak so to a King, or to a great Man, as we do to God Almighty in the Publick Offices of the Church, Men deliver them as if they did not believe God heard them at all; or else, as if they were angry that they were bound to attend him for that small time of his Service in so surly and indecent a manner do some People speak to God in their Prayers, as if they really believ'd he

had indeed forsaken the Earth, *Or that Thou, O God, carest not for it.*

Let us rather, before we begin our Devotions, consider a while that we are in his Presence; that our Closets, the Fields, and the House top are equally under his Inspection; and this will make us Pray to him, according to the Apostle's Advice; *With all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, for God is a Spirit, and we must worship him in Spirit.*

Moses bids the Children of Israel remember, especially the Day that they stood before the Lord their God in Mount Horeb, *Deut. 4. 10. 4.* He charges them to keep it fresh in their Remembrance, and lest it should be thought he was then only present at that famous Time and Place, he assures them that God would dwell among them, and settle his abode with them, that where-ever they went for the future, they might be assur'd of the same Divine Presence that appear'd to them at *Horeb*; and altho' we, who are Christians, have not God as the *Jews* had, for a *Temporal Sovereign*; yet we need not fear that he is withdrawn from us, or turned aside, as a *Guest* that only tarried for that Night of Ignorance. We enjoy, Blessed be God,
the

the Comfortable Influences of his Holy Spirit, to confirm, and strengthen us in all Goodness, to lead us through Difficulties, and to enable us to seek him aright; and what reason have we any more to cry unto God for farther Assistance; nor can we bewail his Absence from us, it is our own Fault if he be so, and this should teach us, not to grieve that Holy Spirit, but to cherish, and be obedient to all its Motions, to hearken to its Checks, and to desire above all things to be under its Conduct and Direction. In the second Chapter of *Jonas*, and at the 1st verse, 'tis said; God heard that Prophet out of the *Whales* belly. He that a little before rose up to flee to *Tarshish* from the Presence of God, now finds him in the midst of the deep, and in the Paths of the Sea, when he call'd upon him; no place could be so remote, but that his God heard him in his Distress, and no place could secure him while he disobey'd his Commands.

God blessed *Obed-Edom*, in whose house the Ark for some time abode, and 'tis probable 'twas for this reason that *Obed-Edom* became a good and a strictly righteous Man, from the thoughts of God's being actually present under his Roof,

this

this brought him to such an awakened Sense of his Duty, that neither he, nor his Houshold could ever after depart from it. What Comfortable reflections may a good Man make upon a review of his Piety and Charitable deeds, when he considers all these things are noted in God's Book, the Satisfaction will not leave him, when he departs out of this World, but will closely attend him at his Arrival in the other. In all the troublesome Affairs that *Joshua* undertook in the Conduct of *Israel* to the Promised Land, this single Consideration carried him through all, and this Promise supported him: *That the Lord his God was with him whithersoever he went*; the Advice fell from a Heathen Pen, but it might very well have become a Christian to have said it; that we should learn to *Reverence ourselves*; there is, we see, a Respect due to Angels, and to Men, but still how much more ought there to be due to God. The Psalmist tells us, *The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers, and that the Continuance of the Lord is against them that do Evil, to root out the remembrance of them from the Earth.*

Ps. 34. 14, 15.

In all our Afflictions God is said to be afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saves us; this was *Hagar's* Consolation when she wandered in the Wilderness, *Gen. 16. 13, 14. That God saw her, and looked upon her distress,* and beheld the Injury that was done her by *Sarah* her Mistress. Let us then cast our Care upon God, who cares for us; let us call upon him in all our wants, for we are assur'd that he that keeps us neither slumbers nor sleeps; let us very often consider these things, and call to Mind the Omnipresence of God, which by all the makers of a Spiritual Life, has been look'd upon as the best, and most engaging Expedient to make Men live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, in this present World, in order to be happy in the next, where God shall be our Everlasting Light, and the days of our Mourning shall be over. The *Jews* say, the meaning of *Enoch's* walking with God, is, that he set the Divine Majesty ever before him, as the ground and Pattern, the Spectator and Rewarder of all his Actions, in all his ways approving himself to his All-seeing Eye, by doing nothing but what was grateful and acceptable to him.

I cannot here pass by one Observation of a Heathen Historian in the Life of *Cato*, who says, all the Harangues made to the Roman Army by *Pompey's* Generals, had little or no Effect, till *Cato* at length with much Vehemence, assured them that the Gods were there present to behold them fighting for their Countries Safety. This wanted not the desired Effect, and inspired them with such a fresh Zeal, and becoming Bravery, that the Victory at that time gain'd, was wholly owing to that Exhortation. But to conclude, since the Wise Man assures us, that God is a Witness of our Reins, and a true beholder of our Hearts, and a hearer of our Tongue, *Wisdom* 1. 7. Let us not deceive our selves by any disguises, nor mock God in the Worship we pretend to pay him, the Hypocrite will then be left in a forlorn State, if, as the same wise Observer has it, *He that speaketh Unrighteous things, cannot be hid.* And every thing is so that we do not utter according to our best, and most noble Apprehensions of him. But on the other side, if our Minds were acquainted with God, and we had an awakened Sense of his Inspection over us, it would have the greatest Force and Ef-

ficacy imaginable upon us, it would make us in imitation of him, endeavour to be Righteous in all our ways, and Holy in all our Works, and in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, adorning our Minds, looking for, and hasting to the coming of God at the last day, when he shall visibly appear to call all Men to Account for all their deeds done in the Flesh, whether they be good, or whether they be evil. Let us therefore now, and at all times humbly beseech him to give us great and dreadful Apprehensions of his glory and immensity, that he is every where present, filling both the Heaven, Earth, and Hell with his glorious Presence; Let us beseech God to Print his Fear mightily upon our Hearts, that we may be fearful to offend him, and careful to please him through the whole course of our Lives, and that from having our Minds continually possessed with his Presence here, we may pass to the Enjoyment of his Presence in Eternal Glory, where we may partake of the Pleasures at his Right-hand, and dwell in the Light of his Countenance for Evermore.

Praying

Of Prayer.

PRAYER is the imploring of the Divine Bounty either by Word or Desire, when we request God to give a Blessing to our selves or others, with a certain Confidence of being heard through Jesus Christ; Now from this definition of Prayer, we may learn 'tis a very religious Worship, whereby the greatest and highest Honour is done to Almighty God, for he that is called upon is believed to be *Omniscient*, and ready to hear all our Petitions in whatsoever place we deliver them, and even to understand the wishes, the desires, and the Necessities, of all Men; nor is the dignity of this Duty less because it is a speaking to Almighty God; when Man despising, and being, as it were, above the visible things of this World, enters into Heaven it self, even into that Court where the King of Kings sits upon his starry Throne, surrounded with innumerable Hosts of blessed Saints and Angels, and offers his Petition to that Tremendous Majesty;

With what Reverence therefore, with what Fear, and with how great Application and Humility ought vile Man to approach a Being of such infinite Purity, to whose all-seeing-eye, the Thoughts of our hearts are open?

St. Paul has enumerated the several instances of Prayer, 1 Tim. 12. 1. 2. Where he exhorts *that Prayers, and supplications should be made for all men; with intercessions and giving of thanks,* which are the several sorts of Prayer to be used by us according to our different Wants and Occasions; One man deprecates an evil that he has just cause to fear, another prays for the obtaining a Good he wants; One Christian interceeds in the behalf of another, as Charity, which is the common Tie of Christianity makes it his Duty, while returning thanks is the business of those whom God has blessed: But, that I may in a more distinct manner, treat of the Duty here recommended, I will do it in this following Method.

First, shew you the Necessity of Prayer.

Secondly, Endeavour to qualifie you for the performance of it.

And

And *Thirdly*, Endeavour from its Effects to show you the Usefulness of it.

I begin with the *First*:

And certainly our own Wants do sufficiently evince the Necessity of this Duty, Nor can there be a greater Incitement to it than a true sense of our own Indigence, for the Life of Man is a Temptation upon Earth, it is exposed to abundance of Dangers and Diseases, subject to desperate Exigencies, and stands in need of a supply of all things, as well in respect of its Spiritual, as of its Animal Life; Our Animal State requires a Supply of the daily supports of Life, such as nourish and sustain our Beings; Vexations, Want, and Despair, sometimes press hard upon us, so that we know not whither to turn to avoid them; All which Holy Job eloquently displays in the beginning of his second Chapter, and the Wise Son of Syrach, thus confirms this Truth in the 40 Chap. of Ecclesiasticus.

Great travel (says he) is created for every man, and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mothers womb un-

til the day that they return to the mother of all things: Their imagination of things to come, and the day of death, trouble their thoughts, and cause fear of heart, from him that sitteth on the Throne of Glory, unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes, and so on: where we may see the Grievs and Calamities of Life very livelily described; Our Humane Nature cannot be supported, nor its Necessities supplied, but by the Riches of his Bounty, who first created us, and who gives us all things richly to enjoy; the very Notion of a Creature implies a dependance, and consequently a Weakness and Inability to provide for it self. *The eyes of all wait upon him, says the Psalmist; and the Lions and young Ravens seek their meat from God.*

We must look upward whither we will or no, for our subsistence; and shall barely looking upwards serve the turn? Shall a rational creature make no further use of his thoughts? When he reflects on the merciful provisions of God? Shall no disposition either to gratitude or his Duty in general stir up in him a heart sensible of the favours he has receiv'd, nor awaken him to consider that day by day he receives his bread from the liberal hand
of

of Heaven? There is still extant among the *Jews* a set of solemn Prayers upon the most important occasions of life; some by way of Address to Almighty God on the account of his gracious vouchsafements to, and his covenant establish'd with the *Patriarchs*, whereby he oblig'd himself to shew mercy and send redemption to them and their posterity by an everlasting ordinance of Love: Another sort were made up of pious acknowledgments to God for all the acts of his providence; as for sending Rain and fruitful Seasons, protecting the Miserable; relieving the Captives, and the like; in some they made profession of Gods eternal Sanctity, and begg'd of him Knowledge and Understanding, that he would inspire them with wisdom, to request things most agreeable and convenient for them, and to avert evil; and last of all, that he would dwell in *Jerusalem*, and hear all Prayer. This I have mention'd, to shew you the most antient manner of Worship extant in the World among those who were once Gods peculiar People; I might give you the sense of *Heathens*, and *Mahometans*, and inlarge very far upon their daily devout Practice of this Duty, oftner, I fear, than many Nations in Christendom can boast; But to avoid being tedious;

Let

Let us consider in the next place the necessity we lie under of frequent Prayer, with respect to the Gospel Dispensation, and our Spiritual Estate; Now we plainly stand in need of all things necessary to Salvation, we must co-operate with our Redeemer, or else his Blood is shed in vain for us, without his inlightning Grace, we are still in the darkness, under which we were born, having our foolish hearts depressed under the burthen of Sense and Imagination: All the disorders of unruly Appetites and Passions distract our Minds, and prejudices seduce us, when we lean to our own understanding,

What truth in general is we are not to inquire, but are both to labour after and pray for as much as is necessary to the discharge of our Duty, and the attainment of that end for which we were sent into the World, that is, to prepare and train up our Souls for the happiness of another; now we must apply our selves to him who is Wisdom it self, and *who inlightens every man that cometh into this world, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh*; If we would know aright what it is that God requires of us; Nor have we any other to have recourse to for Abilities to perform our Duty;

God

God gives, and he takes away at his
 pleasure, He affords Grace to resist
 Temptations, and he alone can pardon
 us upon our Repentance when we are
 fallen: Holiness is the gift of God, and
 his Grace to persevere in a course of it,
 is the greatest and most unspeakable
 Advantage that was ever bestowed up-
 on Mankind, our benighted Souls are
 too apt to dwell upon the borders of
 that Obscurity in which our corrupted
 Nature has involv'd us; We can Sleep
 quietly in Sin, and know no Danger
 in the midst of our Carnal Security,
 Unless it please God to awaken us by
 some Remarkable Method or other,
 and give us a Sense to discern perverse
 Things; O that we had wings like a
 Dove, *Not to flee away and be at rest;*
 that 'tis in vain to hope for in the days of
 our Pilgrimage here on Earth, which are
 few and evil; No, but to ascend near-
 er the Fountain of that glorious Light,
 the Throne of that Sovereign Good, to
 which our Souls should be always uni-
 ted: Here we shall never see those
 happy Moments of Tranquility and Ease
 that we so much hunt after; we shall
 still be strangers to Spiritual Joy, which
 none but pure Minds can have any re-
 lish of; unless we habituate our selves
 to

to this holy Exercise; For let a man have never so much Faith, never so much Goodness, never so much Confidence and Assurance of himself, without a divine influence, they can never spring up to any Maturity, unless Prayer; which is said *to enter into the Clouds*, does from thence bring down a Blessing to make them shoot out a fresh, and to keep them alive and flourishing; in every State and Condition of Life, we stand in need of the Supplies of Grace; No man can be above Prayers, or beyond Temptations, and the very Life of Religion consists in Prayer; it is the Power and Strength of all Religion, it raises us up to God, elevates our Spirits, and gives a Power and an Efficacy to all we undertake; as long as we can converse with God, we are still in Prayer, whether we adore him for his Almighty Power, or bless him for his Favours, or beg of him his Light, and whatsoever is necessary for us.

All the polite Learning; All knowledge of Sciences, and all the Carnal Wisdom in the World without a divine influence is nothing worth, unless there be that holy Temper and Disposition of Mind,

Mind, which can only be acquir'd by Prayer. There is, when we are at our Devotions, something enters into our Faculties, that clears and enlarges them, that opens our views, and makes us see more distinctly, both Heaven, the World, and our selves; that quickens, us, and makes us active and vigorous *in seeking those things which are above,* even in that Place to which we direct them.

Further yet, the Duty here recommended is not only a necessary, but 'tis also a Natural Duty; 'tis natural to pay an humble Respect to that Being which made us, and governs the World; and to worship Him on whom we depend for all we have in it; besides, 'tis in obedience to the Commands of our Saviour, who himself tells us, that *men ought always to pray and not to faint*; and he bids his Disciples use that Form which he had left them. St. Paul, also, 1 Tim 2. 8. commands men *to pray every where, and at all times, and to continue instant in prayer*, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need. We are all of us sensible of many Errors that we are liable to, of many Illusions and Melancholy Thoughts that draw before our Eyes a Veil of Horror

or

and Forgetfulness; there are dark and heavy Hours of Life wherein a Man can find no Relief, but in the breathing of his Soul towards God; if we do not in time apply our selves to this Remedy, despair may be the fatal effect of our Negligence, and our Portion for ever may be a state of irreversible Dissatisfaction hereafter.

Again the necessity of this Duty is evident, not only from the miserable, but also from the Mortal Condition of Man; When we are pass'd off the Stage of this World, we cannot assure our selves that the Prayers of others can avail us any thing; and the Wise Man tells us, *there is no work, nor device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the grave, whither we are going*; Eccles. 9. 10. Most of us have Vices not easily conquer'd; some sins that easily beset us, and may become habitual to us, unless by timely application we beg of God to restrain them.

There is much Time and Patience requir'd to this Work, it is not a slight Thing, but it is for our lives; Eternity depends upon it; We must offer a great deal of Violence to our selves ere we can subdue and mortifie any prevailing Lust or Passion, and some sort of *violence to heaven*, ere they can be forgiven; By degrees we may hope to obtain a Victory,

Victory, if we faint not; God does not give us a Power to subdue our Enemies all at once; he did not so deal with the *Israelites*, whom he led with a stretch'd out arm into the holy Land; they were to drive out the Nations by degrees, and to use the Means of recovering that Possession for themselves. God's Promise was to be their Relyance.

But some may say, what necessity is there of being always upon our Knees, and of all this Earnestness, and Importunity, so much talk'd of, when God knows as well without being told as with it, what our Wants are, and will in his due time, we hope, supply them? To which I answer; that God has made this the Condition of obtaining what we want, *Ask and ye shall have*, was the promise of one who is not a man that he should lye, nor yet of one who after a tyrannical manner, willingly grieves the children of men, by severe and troublesome Impositions; His Commands are not grievous in themselves, but were principally design'd for our Good and Advantage; God's Honour was only secundarily regarded by him in all the Performances he requir'd of Men; we first reap the Advantages, and then God the Honour; and while the Benefit is
ours,

ours; we may very well allow the Glory to be his.

I will not stand to confute the absurd Opinions of some, who hold all things to be carry'd on by a *fatal Necessity*; and that 'tis therefore in vain to ask any thing of God, his Decrees, say they, are unalterable, his will fix'd, and immutable: To what purpose therefore, is it that we should seek unto God, but I will not swell this Discourse with any thing of so little account, I shall here only appeal to those who make a conscience in the discharge of this Duty, whether they do not find the Necessity of it from the Effects: I hope there are none but at one time or other, have had Experience of the kind Returns of Heaven to their Prayer, and will own this to be an indispensable Duty, not to be superseded by any fulness of Injoyment, by any irreversible Decrees of Heaven; Nor by any perfect Condition of Life whatsoever.

I come in the Second place to consider, what Qualifications are necessary to a right Performance of this Duty, *Praying always*, says the Apostle, *with all Prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto, with all perseverance*, Ephes. 6. 18. There is in the Mind of
Man

Man great many very active Faculties, and a vast variety of Operations in his Soul; it is wrought up by Passions implanted in us to violent degrees of Antipathy and Affection; All earthly things and exterior objects, captivate and distract us, and the mind is dissipated by a repeated variety of Sensual Injoyments, Pleasure upon pleasure, like one wave after another buoy it up, and keep it a float in perpetual Agitation: So that it requires infinite Pains and diligence to recall it from this hot pursuit of Vanity and the Creatures. and to unite it firmly to God. Praying in the Spirit and Living in the Flesh, have ever had those marks of Opposition that cannot be reconciled; Our Saviour has told us, *We cannot serve two Masters, either the one or the other must possess us;* Now present things have by many degrees the Advantage of those that are to come; so that unless we are Endow'd with Faith, that peculiar Gift of God to Christians, without which the Apostle tells us, *'tis impossible to please him,* all our labour will be in vain: For *he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him:* Faith is not only an anchor of the Soul, both sure and sted-

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fast, but it is also instead of a compass to all those that voyage to Eternity; it directs their course aright amidst the many Difficulties and Encounters they meet with in this World, and it opens their prospect to the Haven where they would be, and helps them to an *antipast of that rest which remains for the people of God*; This virtue is always put at the head of those many Qualifications of Mind that fit us for Heaven, and that help us to obtain it. *Let him that prays, says St. James: ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; Let not that man think he shall receive any thing of the Lord*; Emphatically signifying without such an assurance, there can be no hopes of being heard at the Throne of Grace: But here I must observe that the Faith here required of Christians in order to this, being heard and accepted of God, is not to be understood of that General Faith in Christ Jesus, which every Christian as such is supposed to have; but of that partitular Faith which is a Confidence of being heard, and of obtaining all our lawful Requests that are made known unto God, and does not only come in among those things which

which accompany Salvation hereafter, but is a most absolutely necessary Virtue in all such as draw nigh unto God in this world; without Faith, there can be no attention of Mind, no real Supplication in the Spirit, for unless we are convinced of the reasonableness of any Duty, we are apt to be very languid and unactive in our Performance. *With the heart,* says the Apostle to the Romans, *Man believeth unto righteousness,* and whenever we are thus prepared for our Duty; how reasonable is it that our Mouths should make Confession unto Salvation; When a man is once Endued with Faith, and perswaded of his own Wants, commending himself to God in his Prayers, keeping within the bounds of reasonable Requests, he not only acknowledges the Power of God Almighty to do these things for him, but he also relies upon his Bounty, that he *shall receive if he faint not.* And this brings me, *Secondly,* to consider the *Watchfulness* and *fervour of mind,* required in order to our performance of this Duty aright.

There can be no effectual Prayer, unless the Mind, and all the Faculties

are Employed, unless we keep them intent upon what we are about, and unless all wandering and drowfiness be avoided; Men may at set times put themselves in a decent and humble Posture, they may come into the Courts of his Presence, and fall low before his Foot-stool, though even this external shew of Devotion is less practised among us than in any other Part of the Christian World; and yet all this while be far from making our Requests be made known unto God; God who is a God of Purity, has required the heart, and he has called his House *the House of Prayer*, though as men appear in it, any other name might fit as well; when a negligent Repetition of perhaps but a part of our Service, is by most People thought enough in Conscience to answer for all their manifold Sins and Transgressions, and to procure all that Good which the most inflamed Devotion can seek after; Surely they think God is bound to give, though they do not ask, and because the *psalmist* says, *Sacrifice and burnt offerings, He will not*, therefore persuade themselves, that both Prayer and Thanksgiving may be safely omitted,

ted, and so defraud him of every part of the Worship he has instituted among men; and if they are not altogether so prophane as this comes to, wholly to neglect calling upon God; Yet they murmur over their Prayers as they do a Charm, and think when the work is done, they are in a fair way of obtaining what they asked:

But believe me, the Conditions are quite otherwise, *we must ask in faith without doubting*; it must be a Supplication in the Spirit, where the whole mind is Employed, a disposition of Soul, fixed and intent on what we are doing, an earnest bent of Spirit, A recollection of Mind, carrying us upwards, which like flame, is always rising higher and higher, towards the place from whence it descended; without this Fervour, and Earnestness in Prayer, all we offer to God, is but trifling with him, a tempting, if not a mocking of God, and barely the amuzing of our selves.

It was not thus that *Moses, Elias,* and *Hezekia* prayed, our Saviour himself, just before his Passion is drawn out to the life, in the hight of an

exalted Piety, contemplating the Glories of his Father, and the Enjoyments at his right hand, in the greatest submission resigning himself to his Will and Pleasure.

With what Zeal was he possessed, for the Good of Men, and what strange Effects had the Intensity of his Mind upon his Body, so as to force from it drops of Blood, instead of Sweat; O good God! Shall there be so little resemblance and proportion between the Performances of Christians and those of their Dying Lord? If what he has already done for us, does not touch our Minds with a sense of Gratitude; Yet let what he is still doing, move us to a becoming Liveliness in his Service; He is now the Mediatour, between God and Man, and he daily intercedes for us with his Father: *Like-wise the spirit helpeth our infirmities, says St. Paul to the Romans, and maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered,* and shall not we joyn in with all these Helps and Furtherances of Devotion? *Have we receiv'd the grace of God in vain? Have we no sense of that inestimable Gift?*
And

And has it no Operation upon our Souls, to move them towards God, the Fountain of Truth and of all Good? Religion was designed to raise and elevate our Minds; to purifie our Affections, and to make *us draw nigh unto God*; Now there can be no Religion in the World, without Prayer, it is that among us Christians, which makes us acquainted with *the power of Godliness, instead of the form of it*, that sets us above the Vanities, as well as the Temptations of a deceitful World, that brings home our scattered Thoughts, and lets into our Souls, more lasting Pleasures than any this World can give.

But we must not presently give over if we find not these Advantages, we must persevere in asking the same thing, over and over again, until we obtain it and until we have, as it were, forced heaven to a surrender; Our Lord illustrates this in the Story of the unjust Judge, who granted the Widows Request by reason of *her importunity*; he himself is said to have prayed three times in the Garden, to show us the necessity of an earnest, and assiduous Zeal in Devotion,

tion, and to have spent *whole nights* thus imployed; God sometimes defers answering our Prayers, until a more convenient Season, that so, when we receive a Blessing, after much address to him and importunity, we may put the higher Value on it, for most things are esteemed so much the more. By how much more difficult they are to be obtained. Let us comfort our selves in the dark and melancholy Hours of Life, when God seems to hide his face from us, with the Prophet *Habakkuk's*; Assurance, *Chap. 2. Verse the 3. Though a blessing tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry:* Perseverance only must obtain the Crown, and no Success can attend a slight and Superficial performance of this Duty, we must be faithful unto Death if we would receive a Crown of Life, faithful to our own Souls here, if we would have them happy hereafter; We must bring a Mind to God well composed, free from Cares and carnal Considerations, not tainted with a Fondness for this World; any of these things being fixed in our Minds; they will be floating uppermost upon all Occasions, and our Petitions will correspond with that Vanity of our Minds; Let us bring to God a
heart

heart above all things sincere, and have real Convictions upon our Mind, of the *Omni-presence* of God; Let us put off all Thoughts of our own Worth or Sufficiency, and humbly confess with *Jacob*, *Gen. 32. 10.* *That we are unworthy of the least of all his mercies, and of all his truth which he hath shewed unto his servant.*

What is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, in the Provisions of this Life, or the Son, of Man that thou visitest him with thy Salvation? That thou affordest him time and space for Repentance; And that thou dost not shut up thy loving-kindness in displeasure? That thou dost afford him Grace to call upon thee, and that thou rewardest such Poor performances of his Duty with an Eternal weight of Glory?

Let no by-regards, no servile Expectations, no depressions of Spirit, nor Vanity of our Minds, work upon our better Part, when we are about to be thus Employed; But whenever we are assaulted by any of these Enemies of our Piety, and of our Peace, Let us make answer as the Prophet *Nehemia*, did to those that disturbed him when he was rebuilding
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ing the Walls of Jerusalem; I am a doing says he, a great Work, so that I cannot come down, Why should the work cease while I leave it, and come down to you?

I will be very brief, in the third and last thing I proposed, where I shall speak of the Effects of Prayer.

Now the First and Chiefest good Effect of Prayer, is, that it cuts off all other Dependencies, makes us know that of our selves, as of our selves, we can do no good thing, because our sufficiency is of God; the Mind of Man, unassisted can accomplish nothing of it self, it can neither know Thruth, nor attain Happiness, nor combat with distress, but by the Assistance of him, through whom you can do all things; We can have no relyances upon Human Aid, nor can the Arm of Flesh bring Salvation to us, but in all these Affairs of Life, God only is to be sought to, who enlightens our Minds, makes us happy by the Communications of himself, and has said, he will not leave us nor forsake us. Unto God will I cry: And unto God will

I commit my cause, says the Royal Psalmist; Experience had taught him that there was neither Truth nor Fidelity, nor help in man, and that no one could be saved by much Strength; But God is the God, of whom cometh our Salvation, God is the Lord, by whom we escape Death. We all of us live upon the Alms of Heaven, so that if by his Providence he withstood from us, the usual supplies of his Bounty, we are in a forelorn and lost Condition. Let us therefore turn our eyes towards the Mercies of God, who will not fail those that seek him, in Sincerity and Truth, remembering that Judgment denounced against Moab for their Pride, for their Carnal Confidence, and for their Contempt of God, Jer. 48. 26. *That they should be made drunk, because they magnified themselves against the Lord, and should be destroyed from being a People.* Let all vain and presumptuous Thoughts vanish and disappear in the Presence of God; for when we sink down into our own Nothingness, and are most sensibly affected with our own Unworthiness, then it is that we lie most open to the kind influences, of Heaven, then it is that the Son of righteousness rises
upon

upon us with healing in his wings; True Humility leaves no room for our own Merits to come into the account but teaches us, that after all we are unprofitable Servants.

All the good we ever did or proposed, is owing to that Supernatural Principle which contrary to the impure and corrupt inclinations of Nature, turns and elevates our Minds and our Hearts towards God, and towards Eternity, and makes us find ineffable tastes and unspeakable Delight in all our Addresses to him.

Another Effect of Prayer is, that it puts us in mind of the Power and Presence of God; that he exalts and brings to the Ground, that he is the great eye of the World, *beholding both the evil and the good*, and that we are under his guardianship and inspection in whatsoever place we are; *Lo he goeth by me, says holy Job, and I see him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.* In all his Afflictions this was still his Consolation, that God was not only ready to hear, but also mighty to save all those that come unto him; How will the Hypocrites account be swell'd at the day of Judgment, that he has so formally,

but

but to so little purpose trod Gods courts ;
without having upon his mind any aw-
ful Sense or true Regard of the Great-
ness and Excellency of his Nature,
*This is truly offering the Sacrifice of
Fools.*

Again: another Effect of Prayer is,
that it makes us resign'd and contented
in all Conditions, resign'd under the
afflicting hand of God, bearing patiently
the Severities of his Correction, and in
all things submitting our selves to him
that judgeth righteously. Contented
with whatsoever is our Portion in this
Life, how small soever it be, 'tis what
God has allotted us ; we may abun-
dantly recompense our selves for the
loss of smaller Enjoyments, by placing
our Joy and our Confidence in God,
who knows best what is convenient for
us ; by this means we shall learn to sub-
mit our wills to the will of God, who
*is just in all his ways, and holy in all
his works,* and with the Resignation of
old Eli, *desire God to do whatsoever seem-
eth him good.*

But lastly, and to have done : I shall
only speak of another Effect of Prayer,
as it relates to our Future State.

There

There will be a time to come when our Necessities shall no more prompt us to importune God in the behalf of our frail Condition; when we shall be all Spirit, and need none of those Qualifications which are here requisite to make us true Supplicants, when that which is mortal of us shall be no more, and all the Supplies we here stand in need of, of no use, because we shall be translated from Imperfection to Strength. But then how shall that Strength be obtained; it must be by accustoming our selves to such holy Employments here as we shall be taken up with hereafter; Now we must qualifie our selves by the practice of this Duty for that blessed Society in Heaven, where we pray, and hope one day to arrive, where perpetual Praises and Thanksgivings shall be our proper Business to all Eternity; There Halleluiahs and Songs of Joy shall be the Eccho of our Prayers and Tears here, there shall be the reverse of our Complaining Condition.

Now, if in our more perfect State we are to be thus employed, ought not our State of Probation to bear some proportion in this holy Discipline?

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Can we think to remove to so vast a Change without some Preparations of Mind, suitable to the Dignity of our future Employment? Without habitual Dispositions towards such holy Offices? Can any thing be so absurd as to imagine we stand in need of nothing to qualify us for Heaven? Or that our Natures need no spiritualizing before hand? But that when we remove from *these tabernacles of clay*, we shall upon the instant of that mighty Change find our selves qualified, for all the Employments of the heavenly Choir; Can such a man, who (instead of Praying always in the Spirit) has lived in the Flesh, abandon'd himself wholly to the Delights of corrupt Nature, prophan'd God's Name, and set at nought his Councils; Can such a one, I say, think himself meet to be *a partaker of the Inheritance with the Saints in light*? What Contradictions! Good God; Does such an Expectation imply?

'Tis such as call not upon God that the Prophet brings in, calling *upon the hills to fall on them, and upon the rocks to cover them*; Such as we have here been, such must we expect to be for ever; the Habits of Virtue or Vice, and the

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Disposition of Soul favouring each of these, will always attend us in a separate State, when our Spirits shall be freed from this Burthen of Flesh. Let us sometimes contemplate the Joys of Heaven, and endeavour as much as our Condition of Life will admit, to *walk in the Spirit, not minding earthly things, but seeking those which are above.* Let us by the practice of this Duty, strive to acquire such a flight of Mind, and such a tendency of Soul, as may make us sometimes even enter into Heaven it self, and, as it were, assist at the employment of its Spiritual Inhabitants, that so when we come to inherit those Blessed abodes, no surprizing Task may be set us:

I shall make two or three Inferences from this Discourse.

The First is, That if God be the Center of all Felicity, the Fountain and Source of all our Happiness, the nearer we draw to him, the happier we must needs be, the Joys of Heaven arising from our nearness to him; Now in this World we have no other way of drawing nigh unto God but by Prayer, and therefore this Duty
ought

ought to be looked on by us, not as a slavish or a harsh imposition, but rather as that which affords us abundance of Delight and Pleasure.

If we Love God as we ought to do, and according to the Natural propensities of that Passion, we should be above all things delighted in conversing with him, and uneasy until we had contracted a familiarity with God; We should be desirous of telling him upon every occasion our Desires and our Wants, and what those things are which most nearly affect us, we should be pleased to the last degree, as those are, whose hearts and minds are under the power of his prevailing Passion, to be always in their presence who are beloved by us, and to unburthen our Souls to them, with all the agreeable marks of Tendernefs and Respect.

By our readiness or aversion to this Duty, we may best be enabled to guess at the state of our Souls, whether the Love of God be in us or not; Our Saviour tells us, it is the first and great commandment, to *Love the Lord with all our heart, with all our Mind, and with all our soul;* *the*

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true indeed, the Action cannot exceed
 the Faculty acting, and an infinite
 Affection cannot issue from a limited
 Capacity; Yet the Heart is ungrateful
 and disloyal, if it give not it self the
 full reins and scope of all its Activity,
 and this is to Love God, as our Saviour
 expresses it, with all our heart, when
 we approach him by the Motion of
 the heart, that is, when we adhere to
 him by Affection and Prayer; To
 love him, with all our mind, is
 when our Thoughts are taken up
 with the Meditation of heavenly Things,
 when God is the principal Object
 of our Thoughts, when his divine Per-
 fections, Benefits, and reveal'd Truths
 are the exercise of our Understand-
 ing; To love God with all our Soul,
 is when we have God before our eyes, in
 the use of all the faculties of our
 Soul, and when both the outward and
 the inward man unite and conspire
 in his Service; The love of God is
 wholly interior, and though it break
 forth into sensible Practices, 'tis the
 heart only that Loves; when the heart
 does not accompany these Actions,
 they are inanimate and fruitless, and
 the heart does not co-operate when
 it does not love, the true, Worship-
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pers are said to adore God in Spirit, and in Truth.

Secondly, if it be our Duty to pray always, How much more cause have we to do so, when any Misfortune or Calamity befalls us, or when we are thrown into such Times of uncertainty, as these we live in, which bear upon them the Character of the latter days? The Judge of all the World, for ought we know, is at the door, the next surprizing Noise may be that of the Angels Trumpet; and then the neglect of praying to God here may occasion our being consigned over to that place, where Misery and Despair will be our Portion for ever; And then what will become of us? What will be our Employment? What our prospect? The past is not to be recalled, and the future affords more gloomy and dreadful Expectations; this truth then will be found too late, *That one day spent in Gods court, is better than a thousand*, and that all our life long is little enough to prepare for our mighty Change; Since therefore the practice of this Duty is of so great moment; *Let us pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, let us perse-*
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vere in our Petitions for Grace, for Mercy and Forgiveness of Sins, for the accomplishment of his Kingdom, and for a place in Glory, when all these imperfect Performances shall have an end.

And lastly to have done.

Let me exhort every Christian, to pray to God at all times, to the full extent of his Faculties, to have an actual Intention in his Prayers, and call upon him with his whole heart, until the time shall come when God shall give us all more enlarged and Sanctified Hearts and Lips, to praise him with to all Eternity; I cannot too much exhort you, *Christian Reader*, to all Seriousness and Earnestness in the discharge of this Duty, because the very life of all Religion consists in it; The natural life may as well stay with the body, when 'tis inclining to Dust and Corruption, as a true sense of Religion remain upon that mans mind who habitually neglects this Duty; Let every Person we meet or converse with, be the subject of our Prayers and best Wishes, and on all Emergencies, let us be ready to
say

say as *Esdra*s does, *Chap. 8. 6.* O Lord, if thou sufferest not thy servants, that we may pray before thee, and thou, give us seed to our hearts and culture to our understanding, that there may come fruit of it, how shall each man live that is corrupt, who beareth the place of a man?

Let us not neglect the Publick Prayers of the Church, but take shelter in God's House, who is the best Sanctuary, and Patron in distress; and by this Method we shall be made sensible; that 'tis God alone can support us under any Trouble of Mind, under any afflicting Sickness of Body, under any loss of the dearest Friend, and under every impatient Thought.

Of A Spiritual Mind.

IN the order of these Discourses, this is very proper to follow the foregoing one, and is the genuine Effect of the last Duty; to arrive at this Temper of Mind, is what the most exalted strains of Christianity, aim at; Now for the attainment of this, give me leave a while here to descend into corrupt Nature, the better to illustrate what I am to discourse of by its contrary.

The Apostle tells us, *Rom. 7. 18. That in him, in his, and all mens flesh dwelleth no good thing*; and he elsewhere sets down this plain and uncontested Aphorism, *Gal. 5. 16. That the desires of the flesh, and of the spirit are contrary one to the other*; and consequently, that to which soever of these the Will of Man consents, it must of course reject the other; and to strengthen yet what St. Paul has affirmed of this Contrariety, Our Sa-
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viour himself has told us, *We cannot serve two Masters, for we shall Love the one and hate the other; We shall adhere to the one and despise the other; Ye cannot,* says he, *serve God and Mammon.* 'Tis from the different Tendencies of Mens Souls, from that prevailing Principle within them, *whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto the life and Salvation,* that men are denominated good or bad, happy or miserable, *alive or dead;* it must be from the constant Tenor of a Mans Thoughts and Actions, that he is to make an estimate of himself, according as he either indulges himself in impure or sensual Pleasures, or as he denies himself, and mortifies his earthly and carnal Affections, and aspires to a heavenly Life in the exercise of the several Instances of his Duty, that he must be called either a man of a Carnal or of a Spiritual Mind.

As we call the Spirit serving the Flesh carnal, so we call the flesh serving the Spirit spiritual, not because it shall be turned into the Spirit, as some think, but because it shall serve the Spirit, and be subject to its Em-

Pire: Our life is compared in Scripture to a Fight, and to a State of Warfare, now the severe Conditions of that State of Life, are either to conquer or die; *Aut cita Mors, aut Victoria lata.*

Thus it is also in the Affairs of our Souls, we either soon immerse them in Sensual Delights, and in the corruption of the World, which too fast lay hold upon us, or else we must early dispute the Passage with these Enemies of our Peace, before they have gained strength to over-set our Reason, or put a Byass upon our headstrong Will; This must be our early Task, if we would be happy; This the Business of our whole Life, would we Enjoy the Blessing of a *Spiritual Mind*. Men are finite and limited Beings, therefore they cannot operate divers ways at once with equal Vigour, and our rational and sensitive Propensions are made in such a regular order, that proportionably, as the one increases in activity, the other always decays; and so accordingly as we abate in the strength of our brutish, we shall improve in the vigour of our Rational Faculties; there is such

a thing as Self-Love in the Nature of Man, that issues forth and spreads it self into as many Streams as men have Appetites and Inclinations; it variously disposes them according to the different Genius they are of, to the pursuit of different Things, and carries them out into a large Field of desires and the Enjoyments of Life; One proposes to himself Pleasure, another Profit, Vain-glory; Ostentation and Honour, bewitch others, and fasten them to the Objects in which they seek for these things: Now the fountain and foundation of our Animal Life is Sense, as it is taken largely and opposed to Faith, and imports our Perception and Resentment of things as they are, either troublesome or agreeable to us; These Animal Affections, if we consider them in themselves, as they are implanted in us by nature, are no ways vicious or blameable; Nay, they are Instances of the Wisdom of the Creator, furnishing his Creatures with such appetites as tend to the Well-fare and Preservation of their Lives; These are instead of a Law to the Brute-Beasts, whereby they are directed towards the ends for which they were made:

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But man being design'd for higher Purposes, and to be guided by more excellent Laws, becomes guilty and criminal, when he is so far transported by inclinations of his lower Life, as to violate his Duty or Neglect the higher, and more noble Designs of his Creation. Our Natural Affections are not to be wholly eradicated as some would have them, but only over-ruled and moderated by a superior and more excellent Principle; and this constitutes the difference that there is between a religious and a wicked Man, that in one the Divine Life bears the Sway, but in the other, the animal is the prevailing Part. *To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace.*

I might here inlarge upon the Opposition of these two, but since it would be too tedious to show you how in the several acceptations of the Word Death, this might be verified, of Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Death; Yet since a Spiritual Death stands chiefly opposite to the State I am about to describe and recommend to you, and is the sure fore-runner
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of that which is Eternal, I shall here chiefly illustrate this Truth of Deaths being the Effect of a Carnal Mind in this, which seems to be the most apposite Signification.

To be carnally minded is death; Now a spiritual death is, when a man falls from the Happiness and Sanctity of a divine Life by aversion from God, when his Soul, which was made more for the sake of being united to God by the Knowledge of Truth, and the Love of God, than to inform a Body, degenerates from the Dignity to which it was principally designed, and becomes sensualized and Carnal, when it delights in, and is wholly taken up with gross and bodily Pleasures; when the Judgment is no longer the commanding Faculty, but Men blindly and slavishly follow the Dictates of Sense, and the Motions of their Passions: In short, when the Soul and Body, those two parts which constitute a Man, seem to us to be no longer, but one and the same substance, and that the body is what some Etymologists have derived its very Name from *σῶμα* quasi, *σῆμα τῆς ψυχῆς*. *Sepulchrum Anima*, The Sepulchre

chre of the Soul, in which it lies as it were interred, lost to all the proper actions of its first Designation by God, and sunk down and depressed by the weight of earthly Affections; in this sense it was, that Gods curse took place upon *Adam*, when he had eaten the Forbidden fruit which *Nemefius* tells us, had a Natural Propensity to cast man upon the care of the Body, and to draw him from the Contemplation of the Soul; *In the day that thou eatest thereof*, says God, *Thou shalt surely die*; now it might have been expected that *Adam* (as *Ananias* and *Saphira* did) should have immediately expired on the very day and Minute that he sinned; Yet we read that he lived no less than *nine hundred years* after his Transgression; We must therefore understand that he died a legal and a spiritual Death, lost all those Perfections, all that Propensity of his Mind towards God, towards Immortality and Heavenly things, with which he was Endowed when he came fresh out of the hands of his Maker: The Union that there was between God and his Soul was dissolved, which before he had sinned, was so strong, that no Violence could

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be so great as that of a Separation; so that what is here said of *Adam's* dying the death is only meant the strengthening the Union of the Soul with the Body, that these two Parts should be one, wedded to the pleasures and interests one of another, and, as it were, one and the same Substance: 'tis told us in the Book of *Esdras*, of our first Parents; *That which was good in them at their Creation departed, but the malignity of their Substance continued*; and from hence have we derived all our subjection to Labour and Sorrow, and Death; from hence it is, that as the prophet *Jer.* speaks; *We give reins to our own disposition, as horses furiously rush to the Battle, that we serve the Creature rather than the Creator, who is God blessed for evermore.*

Pythagoras hints at this great Degeneracy of Mankind, in his Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, where he fancies, that intemperate and lustful Men at their leaving the Body, are turned into Goats and Swine; and so of the other Dispositions, the Moral of that Fabulous Doctrine is at least so far good to show us a Heathens Sense
of

of Things ; That Rational Men may make themselves Brutes, by indulging those Appetites which we have in common with them to any degree of Excess.

The Death of an intelligent Being is to be without God and Reason, which privation is attended with a constant Mutiny of all the lower Affections : St. Paul, *1 Tim 5. Chap.* and at the *6 Verse* : Says, *The widow that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives,* that is : It is the nature of Pleasure to stupifie and enervate the Soul, and make it utterly incapable either of Virtue or any clear Reflection.

'Tis said to the Angel of the Church of *Sardis*. Rev. 3. 1. *That she had a Name that she lived, and yet was dead ;* and that was, because her Works were not found perfect before God, and because there were but a few Names in *Sardis*, which had not defil'd their Garments ; after the same manner of speaking it is, that Sinners are said in Scripture, to *be blind*, not that they suffer in their Organs a privation of Sight, but that they were ignorant of Divine and Spiritual Things, and had no perception

ception of them ; The Light of the Gospel had not inlightned their Minds ; and therefore they remained in that Darknes, to which the Corruption of their Nature had made them subject ; our Saviour, *Matth. 24. 28.* Thus prophecies of the Jews ; *Wheresoever the Carcass is, there will the Eagles be gathered together,* where we may observe, that he Compares that people (who thro' their Carnal Minds had rejected the *Messias*, because he came not in Pomp and Splendor, and with Assurances of Temporal Greatness) he here compares them to a dead Carcass, whom the *Roman* Eagles (a figure here used to express their Power, should utterly destroy and conquer.

I have here before me a large Field of Discourse ; what might I not say of all that Catalogue of restless and distracting Passions, which do, as it were, wear out and destroy Humane Nature ; How is the Soul of Man disturbed, and his Body harrassed by Hatred, Aversion, Grief, Fear, and Despair ; when any of these are indulg'd to in any degree of Excess ; Now all these take their Origin from a Carnal Mind ; when Men are angry, or when they

they grieve, it is for Privation of what they too lightly priz'd, the Loss of such Things commonly inflame them, and they presently run into the Extream of those Passions which are more immediately under the direction of Vice.

Anger is that Flame which Nature kindles in the Soul of Animals, and there is none of all the Passions which raises greater disturbances in the Mind, and bereaves Man of himself, by driving out all Sweetness and Humanity from his Breast, more than this does; it is a turbulent agitation that Grief and Boldness move in the Appetite, whereby the Soul retires in her self, to estrange her self from the injury received, and at the same time, is raised against that which caused it to be done by way of Revenge.

These mixtures, and their Effects, these motions wherein this Passion consists, produce something very pernicious to the Nature of Man; An unequal motion and vehemence where the Blood and Spirits undergo, so much disorder and confusion, must of course weaken our Faculties and impair

pair our Reason, and destroy our Health.

Such unpeaceable Companions and Jarring Principles, where there is a combat of so many different Motions, where the Blood is precipitated, and whatsoever is malignant in the Veins stirred up and set a float in the body, such alterations must certainly have the same effect as all intestine Divisions have, which is to lay waste the Scene of their Action.

But I have said enough of this, the truth might be made more evident from many Arguments that I here on purpose omit; that to be *carnally minded is death*, but this is to be succeeded by the other Assertion of the Apostle; that to be *Spiritually minded, is life and peace*.

Now there is, when men are arrived at this happy State, a Serenity spreads it self upon the Mind, something that clears and enlarges their Faculties, and makes them relish the Pleasures of Devotion, and discover more exactly the Boundaries
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of Truth; This was the mighty Privilege St. Paul boasted of, 1 Cor. 2. 10. That God had revealed unto him such things as eye had never seen nor heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man, to conceive the things which God prepared for them that love him; but then he goes on at the 14 Verse, describing the unhappiness of the opposite State; *The natural man*, says he, *receiveth the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*; This is that. $\psi\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma\ \sigma\upsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\gamma\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$. The Man using only his Reason, not having his Mind illuminated from above, but judging all things according to Human Appearance, not pretending to apprehend the Mysteries of God:

A spiritual mind consists in the free and vigorous Exercise of our Rational Faculties upon the best and worthiest Objects; for when once our Passions and Appetites are perfectly subdued to our Reason, when the Grace of God has got the ascendent in our Soul, our Understandings will be fixed upon the Contemplation of the

the Sublimeſt Truth, our Wills intirely reſigned to the Choice and Embraces of the Chiefſt Good, our Affections unalterably devoted to the Love and Fruition of Gods infinite Perfections; The life and health of a reaſonable Soul conſiſts in being perfectly reaſonable, the life of a Chriſtian in having the ſuper-addition of Grace.

He that is *ſpiritually minded*, that has prepared and habituated himſelf to Spſritual Employments, may, while he is here on Earth, take a glorious Ante-paſt of his future happy State, and bring himſelf to deſpise the ſordid Entertainments of earthly Pleaſures, when he looks up to that Place of Purity and Reſt, to which theſe Qualifications of Mind will conſign him.

The proſpect of Eternal Life in Glory is a ſufficient Inducement for us to ſet about this Task, of purifying our Minds and ſpiritualizing our Natures, but to convince you by more ſenſible Arguments than the Pleaſures at Gods Right-hand, and thoſe things which Religion reveals to us; I will here ſhow you from

the Nature of the Thing, how a *piritual mind* is productive of Life, and Peace in this World.

He that has brought himself to this happy Temper, that can see by the eye of Faith, the things that relate to another World, that can turn his Mind to God, and resist the Violence of his Passions with the least Reluctancy; that can withdraw himself from Time, from the World, and from himself, finds an universal Calm and Quiet in all his Faculties, both of body and mind; No impetuous torrents, whose waves precipitate themselves upon one another, disorders his Mind, or have any influence upon his Constitution, but his Spirits and his Blood slide gently along their Channels, where the Passage is large and even, and the dilated Vessels proportionably enlarged, give the more Liberty, and render their Course less turbulent and confused: Such disquieting Passions as Anger and Grief, have contrary Motions, and by consequence, produce no happy Effects in the body of Man their frequent returns, and the agitation of the Mind under him, conduce

duce no less to the decay of Human Nature, than the being indifferent Mediums serves to destroy the Texture of the most durable inanimate Things;

I need not here speak of those unruly Transports of Mind, which harrass and lay waste our Minds, and shipwreck our Reason, upon every Rock of Offence or Pleasure, the alterations which such Encounters produce. I have already spoken of in their proper place: The beginnings indeed of some of our Passions may carry a shew of much Pleasure and Content, and are to our Natural Life like those peaceable Minds, which a weak Heat raises, but they afterwards turn into violent Whirlwinds, when they grow stronger, and instead of refreshing us, become our overthrow.

I have already made it plain, that when Lust, Despair, or Grief, have laid hold on the Mind, the Imagination is disturbed, and the whole frame of Nature put out of course, and those great and unhappy Storms produced, that often made

us loose both our Reason and our Health.

But abundantly enough of this, lest I bethought to interfere with another Profession, with which I am not here concerned.

There is in the love of God, in the desire of being happy in him, in the hopes of Eternal Bliss, and in the Joy that accompanies such Hopes of Salvation, abundance of calm and quiet Pleasures, wherein the Soul feels nothing that riles the Mind and provokes it to impatience; 'tis then that she is, as we may say, at Rest in her Motion; I hope there are many who can subscribe experimentally to this Truth, that Religion and a godly Life are productive of much Quiet and Satisfaction, compared with a contrary course of Sin of Riot and Excess.

You have, Christian Reader, I hope, at some time or other, known what the Temper of Mind is, which is produced by the display of Supernatural Good; in a word, what those Pure and True Delights are, which
never

never disquiet the Soul, but always leave behind them a pleasing . Serenity :

It was the Opinion of the divine *Plato*, That there was a Madness transmitted from the Body to the Soul, and that the Heart had a power of disturbing the Rational Faculties ; that men might *συναΐδεν τὴν ψυχὴν*, embody their Souls, and so verifie in themselves that tender expression of *Ruth* to her Mother-in-Law, *Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried* ; Of the difference of these two States, of a carnal, and of a Spiritual Mind, *St. Augustine* very fully discourses in his *City of God*, *Book 15. Chap. 12, &c.* Where he calls those that live after the Flesh, and those that live according to God, two Cities, mystically signifying two Societies, the one predestinate to reign eternally with God, the other condemned to perpetual Torment with the Devil ; the one are the Sons of the Flesh, the other the Sons of Promise ; the one *the children of the bond-woman, the other of the free.*

This is also further illustrated in the 4th Chap. of *Dan.* where *Nebuchadnezzar*, looking downwards, indulging himself in the sensual Enjoyments of Life; became a Beast, *had a beasts heart given him*; but lifting up his eyes again to Heaven, he was restored to the Life, and to the form of a Rational Man.

Nunquid in te sunt viscera pietatis, says *St. Bernard*, *Qui plangis corpus à quo recessit anima, & non plangis animam à quâ recessit Deus?* Are there any bowels of Compassion in us, to bewail a body from which the Soul is departed, and shall we not lament over that Soul from which God has withdrawn himself?

Life and peace are the two great Blessings that all mankind labour to enjoy, *to live and to see good days*, the effect of living well, is what I need not prompt you to seek after, every man's Notions are commonly true in these things, and all men have the same desire to be happy; There is a Peace of Mind the World cannot give, No earthly Satisfaction can procure it, every Creature, and
every

every Pleasure says, it is not in me,
and the earth and all the Fulness
thereof says, it is not in me:

And *Eternal Life is the gift of God*,
which he bestows on none but those
who *diligently seek it*, by Prayer and
Preparation of Mind, suitable to the
Dignity of it: We must nor think
that our carnal and earthly Affections
can be dropp'd like *Elisha's Mantle*,
as we are mounting towards Heaven;
No, we must put them off here
ere our time of removing hence is
come, if we would be inducd here-
after *with the white robe of the Lamb*,
and follow him that is gone to prepare
a Mansion for us in his Fathers House;
wheresoever he goeth, God has long
since by his Prophet told us, *That*
there is no peace to the wicked. They
are compared to *the troubled Sea*, whose
waters cast nothing but filth, that is:
Their Mind suggests to them nothing
but Black and brutish thoughts which
disturb their Life here, and their
Conscience foretell an uneasy and
dismal Futurity; *Peace* was the Legacy
of our dying Lord, it was the sub-
ject of the Angels Hymn at his Birth,
tis what God has called us to, and
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is by the Apostle said to be *the fruit of the Spirit*; The Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* could not discern the things that made for their Peace, because through a Carnal Mind they looked for a Temporal *Messias*; This was their Death, and this brought upon them and their City destruction: And this may be our own Case, if thro' earthly Dependencies, if through too great a Love and Fondness for the Creatures, we neglect our Duty, and become lost to all the proper Actions of a Christian in the State of his Spiritual Life:

Our Saviour has told us that *the Kingdom of God is within us*, that it does not consist in Meats and Drinks, but in Sanctity and Righteousness;

Let us therefore turn unto the Lord with all our hearts, forsaking this miserable World, in which grows nothing but sorrow and discontent, and then our souls shall find Rest;

The Love of God, must out-weigh all carnal Considerations, and all the Pomp of Exterior Things: the Love
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of Jesus Christ must make us despise our selves and follow him, who for our sakes denied himself the Comforts of Life, that we henceforth *might not live unto our selves but unto God, who died for us.*

No man can have two Joys, the the fulness of Pleasure in this World, and the rewards of Glory in the next; *San remember that thou in thy life time receivdest thy good things,* was said upon a miserable occasion, when there was no remedy left for the Errors of Life.

Let not men have the upper hand, O Lord; Let not the Concerns of a Moment unqualify us for the Happiness of Eternity: Nor the cares of this Life abolish our hopes of Glory; But let the Thoughts of God and Religion always prevail upon our Minds in the midst of our worldly Occasions, that they may not fasten our Souls to earthly Things, nor depress our Spirits when they should seek those things that are above.

To conclude; Would you seek what is advantageous for Health, for length of Life;

of Life, and for what will procure the Rewards of Virtue in Heaven? Let it be in the Paths of a quiet and virtuous Life, in the repose of a well-governed and spiritual mind, where our Animal Spirits are not dissipated, and our Natural Heat destroyed, where no violent Agitation makes us languish; and where irregular Motions do not interrupt the course of Life; This is that *Peace which every man has, that walketh with God, and in which St. Paul tells us the Kingdom of God consists*; This alone can make us happy here, and prepare us for it hereafter, holds fast our Souls, our Lives, and our Days, and consigns us to the Repose of another Life, and is not out-dated by the Years of Eternity;

Let me conclude in the Apostles words to the *Romans*, Chap 6. 12, 13, 14 *verse*:

Let not sin therefore reign in your bodies, that you should obey it in the Lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield your selves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of unrighteousness.

righteousness unto God, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace, and to say no more.

Let us follow the Advice of *Eliphaz* to his friend *Job*, Chap. 22. 21. And we shall find the blessed effect of it, where speaking of Almighty God, he says, *Acquaint thy self with him, and be at Peate.*

F I N I S.

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...and God, for we are not
...the Law of the Lord, and
...to say no more.

I have followed the voice of the Lord
...my friend, and I have
...and I shall find the Lord
...where I am, and I shall
...the Lord, and I shall
...and I shall find the Lord.

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W. V. S.

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